

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-6, and 8-17 are pending in the patent application. The Examiner has newly rejected Claims 1, 3, 5-6, 10-11, 13 and 15-16 under 35 USC 102 as anticipated by Stefik; Claims 4, and 14 under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Stefik in view of Burgess; Claims 8 and 12 under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Stefik in view of Salas; Claim 9 as unpatentable over Stefik and Salas in view of Peters; and Claim 17 as unpatentable over Stefik in view of Peters.

The present application teaches and claims a system and apparatus for automatically determining, updating, and indicating user access status for each of a plurality of users of collaborative groupware software. The user access status indicates, for every user, whether that user has accessed each document and is viewable by all of the users of the groupware. The invention includes means and steps for tracking user access status and displaying the user access status for every user in a status row bar in a view window at the display of each user of each document of the groupware. All users of the groupware can check the user status for all other users of each of the documents accessible via the collaborative groupware software.

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The primary reference cited is the Stefik patent. Stefik teaches a system and method whereby a small-scale representation of shared data is viewable by a user who has access to that shared data. As illustrated in Fig. 1, small-scale representations of shared bodies of data A, B, C and D are depicted on a user's screen. If there is current activity relative to one body of the shared data, the activity is somehow indicated (e.g., shading or blinking) on the small-scale representation of that shared data. Throughout the description, Stefik expressly describes indications of **current** activity on a body of shared data being provided in the small scale representation (see: e.g., "currently viewing" at Col. 4, lines 65-68; "updated as changes occur" at Col. 5, lines 14-18; "during that activity" at Col. 7, line 12; "performing an activity" at Col. 7, line 47; "currently accessing" at Col. 7, line 52; "[w]hen activity affecting the shared data begins to occur...[and] as more activity affecting the shared data occurs" at Col. 8, lines 2-5 and lines 13-17). Stefik does not teach or suggest display of user access status indicating whether each particular user has **ever** accessed at least one document of groupware. Rather, Stefik provides an indication that some activity related to the shared data is

**currently** occurring. Stefik does suggest that the indication may include the identity of one or more users who are **currently** viewing the large-scale representation of shared data and/or the small-scale representations of the shared data (Col. 4, lines 65-68). However, such does not teach or suggest providing an indication of the user access status for every user as to whether they have **ever** accessed a document. Stefik also teaches that the "identity of the user performing an activity relating to shared data may also be helpful" (Col. 7, lines 46-48). However, that teaching simply means that the small-scale representation will indicate that there is current activity by the identified user. Again, such does not teach or suggest providing an indication of the user access status for every user as to whether they have **ever** accessed a document. Stefik does not teach or suggest displaying user access status as defined by the present Specification and claims. Stefik displays data status, not user status. Moreover, Stefik does not display status of more than one user.

It is well established under U. S. Patent Law that, for a reference to anticipate claim language under 35 USC 102, that reference must teach each and every claim feature. Since the Stefik patent does not teach maintaining, updating

and displaying user access status indicating whether each user has ever accessed a document for every one of a plurality of users of groupware, it cannot be maintained that the Stefik patent anticipates the invention as recited in independent Claims 1, 6, and 10 and those claimed which depend therefrom.

With specific reference to Claim 3, Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's interpretation of the teachings from Cols. 7 and 8 of Stefik. The cited passage from Col. 7, line 65 through Col. 8, line 20 refer to an indication of the "extent of activity affecting the shared data". The cited passage does not anticipate the claim language of indicting what percentage of users of each group have read each document.

Regarding Claims 5, 11 and 13, the Examiner concludes that Stefik teaches the user status indication as claimed. Applicant reiterates that Stefik displays a data indicator not a user access status indication.

With regard to Claims 15-16, Applicant agrees that Stefik teaches input devices and screens; however, Applicant maintains that Stefik does not teach those components in an apparatus for carrying out a method of indicating user access status as claimed.

In rejecting Claims 4 and 14, the Examiner additionally cites the Burgess patent. The Burgess patent is directed to a system and method for a single user to check whether or not he has read a file. Burgess provides a user bitmap which comprises a snapshot of each file with a bitmap code (i.e., a file status indicator) which tells the user whether or not he has read a file. The Burgess user can only view file status for his own files. Since Stefik only teaches indicating data status which shows that data are currently being accessed, it would not be logical to modify Stefik with Burgess' teachings regarding whether the single user has read the data. Further, Applicant respectfully asserts that Burgess neither teaches nor suggests that when the documents are divided into document groups, each of which consists of a plurality of documents, a method further comprises displaying a document group status indication showing whether at least one of the documents in each document group has not been read for each document group, as recited in Claims 4 and 14. Applicant concludes, therefore, that the combination of teachings of Stefik and Burgess do not obviate the language of Claims 4 and 14.

The Examiner has additionally cited the Salas and Peters patents in rejecting the language of the remaining

claims which depend from Claims 1, 6 and 10. Applicant respectfully asserts that none of the cited references teaches or suggests those claim features which are missing from the Stefik patent, as further detailed below. Applicants rely on the discussion of Stefik provided above, and will not repeat all of the arguments.

The Salas patent is directed to tracking user access to shareware, which is available to users for testing and/or demonstration. Salas teaches, in the cited passage from Col. 5, lines 43-49, that an item box will include an item's version, indicating whether an item has been changed. There is nothing in the Salas teachings that states or suggests that the Salas system automatically tracks, updates, and displays/notifies users of changes. Nor is there any teaching or suggestion in Salas that user access status is maintained for every one of a plurality of individual users. Rather, when shareware is posted for access by users, it is posted with an item box that indicates its version, etc. as input by the individual who updated and posted the shareware. Newly posted shareware is necessarily "not read" by any user. Its item box shows document status, "not read by any user", since it is new. It does not indicate individual user access status with respect to the new

version. With regard to the cited passage from Col. 12, lines 31-37, Salas teaches that a user may interact with or modify the shareware. Salas does not teach, however, that information in the item box is altered when a user interacts with or modifies the shareware. While Salas provides group, or team, access to a single user document, Salas provides no teaching or suggestion of a system or method for maintaining user access status for the document for every user of the team. Further Salas provides no teaching or suggestion of a system or method for displaying user access status for multiple users of multiple document, wherein the user access status is viewable by every user of the team. Even if one were to attempt to modify Stefik with Salas, one would arrive at a system wherein data status would be displayed, either as currently being viewed/updated or no currently being viewed/updated. The combination would not, however, have any capability of determining what other users had accessed the document, let alone a capability to display user access status for every user. Applicant concludes, therefore, that the combination of Stefik and Salas does not render the claim language of Claims 8, 9, and 12 unpatentable as obvious.

The Peters patent is cited against Claims 9 and 17 for its teachings related to showing what percentage of users have read a document and for sending reminders to users who have not read a document. Peters neither teaches nor suggests that the system maintain user access status for each document for every user of groupware and that the system display that user access status for viewing by all of the users of the groupware. The Examiner has concluded that "Peters...teaches the system tracks users responses and can be used to send reminders to those who have not responded to prompt action from a few more users." Applicant fails to see how tracking user responses teaches or suggests tracking user access status. If a user accesses a document, but does not generate a response to it, neither Peters nor Stefik provides any way to maintain, update or display that information. The language of Claims 9 and 17 expressly call for a mail generation component to send mail to members of a group who have not read a document. Since none of the cited patents teach tracking user read/access status for document for all members of a group, Applicant fails to see how the combination would obviate the invention as claimed. The Salas indication of a version number is not notification. Moreover, even though Peters can send mail to non-responding

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members, such is not related to reading/accessing but rather to responding. Clearly the combination would not obviate the claim language. Applicant concludes, therefore, that the combination of Stefik and Peters, with or without the addition of the Salas patent teachings, does not obviate the invention as claimed in Claims 9 and 17.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests entry of the amendments, reconsideration of the amended claim language in light of the remarks, withdrawal of the rejections, and allowance of the claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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